

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, May 17, 1802, from
Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe Correspondence,
Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt,
Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson

Richmond May 17. 1802

Dear Sir

I did not receive yours of the 9th till the day before yesterday (15). I am sorry it will not be in my power to see you while at home. Many considerations of a publick nature keep me here for the present, the most urgent of which is the trials, which are in train in several parts of the State, of slaves on the charge of conspiracy and insurrection, and the applications growing out of them for pardon or transportation without our limits, of those who are condemned. Of condemned I recollect abt. 10 or 11 examples whose fate is yet to be decided on by the Executive. This business still holds an equivocal aspect in my view of it. The spirit of revolt has taken deep hold of the minds of the slaves, or the symptoms wh. we see are attributable to some other cause. After all the attention wh. I have paid to the subject my mind still rests in suspense on it. It woud. have given me pleasure to confer with you on this head, that you might commence the measure wh. was deemed most expedient to forward the views of the state respecting this interesting object of its policy. tho' indeed there is so little range for preference of places the few which present themselves being respectively attended with so many difficulties that nothing seems so eligible as to open the door to each for the State, that is to the W. Indies, Africa, & to some position west or

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north of the Mississippi. Whether it will be practicable in either case is uncertain especially the first mentioned. I am inclined to think however that the

sooner it is ascertained respecting each the better. I am persuaded the day is not distant when this subject must have a definitive regulations from the councils of the country.

I will write you more fully in my next wh. will be addressd (I presume) to Washington on the subject of yours. It is doubtful whether the comrs for Richmond for Richmond & Manchester will be able to act for Persbg also. The doubt however proceeds from my not knowing the compensation allowed them. Professional lawyers or merchants woud. not leave this to attend them for a trifling sum. On the other hand if the sume was an object the addition of Petersbg woud. make it more so. I will give you some names in my next-accomodated to either arrangment. Colo. Newton is a very worthy intelligent man with good political views but I do not think that I woud. ask of him a nomination under any restriction. The fact of such a letter woud. probably become known in the place and might excite personal hatred to you without advancing the particular good for altho' I woud. appoint no federalist yet it may have its good effect that the avowal of that sentiment shall be known as rarely as possible otherwise than by the act. I say I woud. appoint no federalist, by which I mean not till it woud. be done with safety, or rather advantage to the republican cause; wh. it can at not time be unless he be a republican. I will inquire who are suitable characters for such an office in Norfolk but woud. not wish you to rely on me as I must report their pretentions in the opinion of others. Very sincerely I am yr. friend & servant

Jas. Monroe

RC (Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress).